

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8173

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AG, MO, SS, FR

SUBJECT: QUAI COMMENTS ON SAHARA, ALGERIA AND MOROCCO

1. IN CONVERSATION FEB. 24, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
NORTH AFRICA D'ALBIS SAID QUAI IS DIVIDED INTO TWO
SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ABOUT ALGERIAN INTENTIONS ON SAHARA.
ONE SCHOOL HOLDS THAT THE ALGERIANS, HAVING GIVEN TIT
FOR TAT AT AMGALA, ARE NOW PREPARED TO LET THE DUST
SETTLE AND EVENTUALLY TO COME TO SOME UNDERSTANDING
WITH MOROCCO. THE OTHER SCHOOL CONSIDERS THAT HAVING
BITTEN THE BULLET, THE ALGERIANS WILL MOVE FROM MASSIVE
SUPPORT FOR THE POLISARIO, THROUGH BACKING FOR INSUR-
GENCY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENTS OF MOROCCO AND MAURETANIA,
TO, IF NECESSARY, FRONTAL ATTACK IN AN ATTEMPT TO OVER-
THROW HASSAN'S REGIME. PERSONALLY, ALBIS THOUGHT THAT
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BOTH SIDES WERE STUDIOUSLY TRYING TO AVOID OPEN WARFARE

FOR THE MOMENT.

2. HOWEVER, HE SAID, PRESSURES ON BOTH HASSAN AND BOUMEDIENE ARE GREAT. ELEMENTS OF THE MOROCCAN ARMY ARE ITCHING TO GET AT THE ALGERIANS AND URGING THE KING TO ATTACK TINDOUF OR SOME OTHER TOWN ACROSS THE BORDER. HASSAN WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO RESIST THESE URGINGS FOR A WHILE, ALBIS THOUGHT.

3. BOUMEDIENE'S PROBLEMS MAY BE DEEPER, ALBIS CONTINUED. A FAILURE IN THE SAHARA COULD LEAD TO HIS OVERTHROW. WHILE THE INNER-WORKINGS OF THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT REMAIN SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, THERE ARE SIGNS OF SERIOUS DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE RULING CIRCLE AND BOUMEDIENE APPEARS TO BE INCREASINGLY ISOLATED.

4. THIS INTERNAL SITUATION PARTIALLY EXPLAINS ALGERIA'S GREAT SENSITIVITY TO THE RECENT BOMBINGS OF ALGERIAN OFFICES IN VARIOUS FRENCH CITIES. THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT YET KNOW WHO IS RESPONSIBLE, ALBIS SAID, BUT FORMER OAS MEMBERS AND HARKIS ARE PROBABLY INVOLVED. THE FRENCH HAVE CONCLUDED THAT BOUMEDIENE FEARS THAT THE NOW REPEAT NOW LARGELY APOLITICAL 800,000 ALGERIAN WORKERS IN FRANCE WILL INCREASINGLY COME UNDER ANTI-GOVERNMENT INFLUENCES, ABANDONING THEIR CURRENT LEANINGS TOWARD THE ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED "AMICALE DES ALGERIENS EN FRANCE." THE RETURN TO ALGERIA OF SUCH WORKERS WOULD POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE REGIME.

5. ALBIS INDICATED HE SHARES THE VIEW OF TUNISIAN FONMIN CHATTI THAT THE OAU MEETING AT ADDIS MAY PROVIDE ALGERIA WITH FURTHER BACKING ON THE SAHARA. EXCEPT FOR SENGHOR, ALL BLACK AFRICANS SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE ALGERIANS WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY THIS THEME TO THEIR DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGE. IN OTHER WORDS, ALGERIAN EFFORTS TOWARDS INTERNATIONALIZATION WILL BEGIN TO BEAR FRUIT.

6. FINALLY, ALBIS NOTED CONTINUING SOVIET AND LIBYAN ARMS DELIVERIES TO ALGERIA. THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT LIBYA IS INCREASINGLY TILTING TOWARDS ALGERIA, BUT,

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ALBIS HINTED, THE FRENCH HOPE PM CHIRAC, DURING HIS UP-COMING VISIT TO LIBYA, WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE QADHAFI TO EXERCISE A RESTRAINING HAND.

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